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MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Meeting of the Special Group (CI) -
Thursday, 9 May 1963

PARTICIPANTS: Governor Harriman
Deputy Secretary of Defense Gilpatric
General Taylor
Mr. Bell
Mr. Wilson
Mr. John Nolan (representing the Attorney General)
Mr. Helms

Southeast Asia

1. Southeast Asia Status Report.

[redacted] of State Department, reviewed the Thailand report pointing out that the overall development was generally positive despite the fact some problems were caused by bureaucratic difficulties on the Thai side. A recent request for ten additional trainers for the Provincial Police was mentioned. While he was aware that these could be military officers, Mr. Bell indicated that AID was confident of being able to recruit civilians for this function. With respect to the financing of a 50 K W transmitter, raised by Mr. Wilson, Mr. Gilpatric suggested that since these would be MAP funds the country team should be asked to recommend what items in the Thai MAP budget should be dropped to provide these funds. Mr. Bell indicated that they might come from Supporting Assistance funds and that the need should be reviewed by the Defense and AID Staffs preparatory to a specific recommendation.

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Re Cambodia [redacted] pointed out the arrival of the South Vietnamese military attache and said that this positive step ahead would have to be gauged by how well he would be treated in Phnom Penh and whether the GVN can be induced to receive a Cambodian attache.

Re Vietnam [redacted] pointed out on the negative side the fact the United States has lost direct control over the counterinsurgency fund but at the same time had avoided a crisis of confidence between the GVN and the United States. Mr. Bell of AID commented that members of the Saigon AID mission are very much concerned about this development and have strong doubts that the Vietnamese will be able to do this job and carry on the field operations necessary to success of the counterinsurgency program. Mr. Bell stated that he felt we should watch this situation closely although he was not prepared to seek any different solution at this time. On the positive side, Mr.

[redacted] pointed out the initiation of the returnee program to which some 3700 Viet Cong had already responded, including some important ones.

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2. Report on the Honolulu Conference on Vietnam.

General Krulak gave an oral summary of the Honolulu Conference. He pointed out the generally positive indications of progress and commented that there was hope that the National Campaign could be launched in July. He reported Ambassador Nolting's comments on the reduced trust and confidence between the GVN and the United States but also the Ambassador's belief that the situation is not critical and can be overcome; he also reported the Ambassador's comments that the leadership of the GVN is as good as or better than any in Southeast Asia. General Krulak summarized the report of the AID representative and the fact that the AID program is fully engaged in counterinsurgency. He then commented on the border control program [redacted] but commented that in any case the border by its very nature could never be sealed completely. General Krulak concluded with General Harkins' remarks that the situation could show improvement in six to eighteen months and that about a year would be an appropriate estimate.

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General Krulak then recounted the Honolulu discussion of the GVN force structure, including the Secretary of Defense's request for a sharp decline in GVN forces as soon as the insurgency problem came under control. He mentioned the Secretary's feeling that a budget for MAP should be prepared on two assumptions:

a. That counterinsurgency is brought under control, in which case it should be approximately \$50,000,000.

b. In case counterinsurgency continues, in which case the sum should be that which is necessary to win.

General Krulak also mentioned the Secretary's request for a specific plan to withdraw 1,000 U. S. personnel by the end of 1963, not as an across the board reduction, but as specific units replaced by Vietnamese

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trained to take their places. General Krulak continued with a report on the discussion of air strikes and the high degree of control exerted to ensure that these do not have unwanted results. He then mentioned the risks of inflation in the projections of the sums needed to make counterinsurgency a success.

The subject of relations with the U. S. press was discussed, emphasizing the desirability of giving reporters better access to news and U. S. military personnel better indoctrination. Mr. Bell suggested that stronger measures would probably have to be taken to publicize the forward motion in Vietnam and suggested the possibility of bringing General Harkins home to talk to Congress, which would have a considerable side effect of assisting his AID presentation to Congress. Several ideas along these lines, such as Secretary McNamara's and the President's indication of somewhat greater optimism, arranging a tour by non-journalistic opinion leaders, etc., were also discussed and it was agreed that the matter would be given further study.

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3. Jungle radios for use in Vietnam.

Mr. Gilpatrick reported that this subject has not proved easy of solution and that the H C 162 radios are still under test. They are highly expensive and it is perhaps possible that the requirements (a twenty-five mile range in the jungle) is too much to ask of modern electronics. General Taylor indicated a willingness to reduce the range requirement if this were necessary but the matter was left that it would be continued to be studied.

The remaining items of the agenda will be reported separately.



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William E. Colby
Chief, Far East Division

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